

CS9. Achieving a successful Central London

9.1 The southern part of Camden plays an important part in providing the vibrancy, diversity and identity that makes the borough such a popular place to visit and live in. It forms part of Central London whose unique role, character and mix of uses provides much of the capital's distinctiveness. Camden's Central London area:

- is a key part of the nation's capital and a major international city;
- is part of London's Central Activities Zone (CAZ) – see below;
- has a significant residential population adding to its life and diversity and supporting economic and other functions;
- has a concentration of nationally important medical, research and higher education institutions;
- is a major business and employment centre and the main focus of Camden's economy. It contains a significant proportion of the borough's office floorspace, a variety of shopping areas, from neighbourhood centres to specialist retail locations like Covent Garden, and is home to many other uses, including legal, health and professional services; food, drink and entertainment and cultural and tourism uses;
- contains many areas with their own characters and identities – e.g. Fitzrovia, Museum Street area, Hatton Garden and Covent Garden – and many places with a high quality and/or historic environment, for example, conservation areas, listed buildings and London Squares; and
- has excellent public transport links to the rest of London and the UK and routes to mainland Europe.

The extent of Camden's Central London Area is shown in Map 17 in Appendix 6. This area forms part of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) designated in the London Plan, which extends across nine boroughs. The Central Activities Zone is the core of the capital with a unique cluster of activities contributing to London's role as a 'world city'.

9.2 Central London will experience much of the growth identified for Camden in future years, concentrated in the growth areas of King's Cross, Euston, Tottenham Court Road and Holborn. In addition, due to its high level of accessibility other parts of central London may be considered to be a suitable location for uses which attract a large number of journeys. Please see policy CS2 for our approach to growth areas and CS3 on other highly accessible areas. Policy CS9 sets out our approach to the unique pressures and challenges faced by Central London and how we will manage growth in the area to ensure it brings benefits to the borough and beyond and protects and enhances the factors that make a popular place to live, visit and do business.

9.3 The challenges facing Central London include managing significant development pressures to ensure that development in growth areas and other locations links with and supports existing communities, and ensuring that its variety of uses can operate and thrive without causing harm to each other. To maintain the character and vibrancy that is provided by Central London's residential communities, there is a need to continue to provide a range of homes including affordable housing, and necessary community facilities and open space. Road and public transport congestion, air quality, noise, the quality of streets and spaces, the management of the night time economy and reducing opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour are also important issues in this part of the borough.



CS9 – Achieving a successful Central London

The Council will support and promote the Central London area of Camden as a successful and vibrant part of the capital to live in, work in and visit. We will:

- a) recognise its unique role, character and challenges;
- b) support Central London as a focus for Camden's future growth in homes, offices, hotels, shops and other uses;
- c) seek to ensure that development in Central London, in the growth areas of King's Cross, Euston, Tottenham Court Road and Holborn and beyond, contributes to London's economic, social and cultural role while meeting the needs of local residents and respecting their quality of life;
- d) support residential communities within Central London by protecting amenity and supporting community facilities;
- e) seek to secure additional housing and affordable homes, including as part of appropriate mixed use developments;
- f) take into account the specific identity of the areas within Central London when taking decisions on planning applications and in relevant initiatives and works;
- g) promote and protect areas of specialist activity, such as the Museum Street area and Hatton Garden;
- h) support the concentration of medical, educational, cultural and research institutions within central London;
- i) preserve and enhance the area's historic environment;
- j) seek to improve the quality of the area's streets and places, the connections between them and the ease of movement into, and through, the area;
- k) continue to designate Central London as a Clear Zone Region to reduce congestion, promote walking and cycling and improve air quality;
- l) promote improved community safety;
- m) manage the location and concentration of food, drink and entertainment uses and their impact;
- n) allocate sites within Central London for appropriate uses, including offices and housing, in the Camden Site Allocations document.

- 9.4 The Council will seek to promote a successful Central London area while achieving a balance between the interests of its residents and the area's economic, social and cultural use and roles. As Central London experiences the most intense development pressures in the borough and contains a diverse and dense mix of uses, including a significant residential community, the need to ensure that development supports the continued success of the area but does not cause harm to its neighbours is particularly acute in this part of the borough (please see policy CS5 and policy DP26 – *Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours* in Camden Development Policies).
- 9.5 Central London is the location of most of Camden's growth areas (King's Cross, Euston, Tottenham Court Road, Holborn). Development in these areas, and throughout Central London, should contribute to the area economically, socially and environmentally, through providing a substantial number of new jobs and space for businesses; supporting community facilities; protecting and improving the amenity of local residents; being of high quality design and by contributing to improving open space. Camden's Central London area will continue to be the borough's economic focus, contributing to the success of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) and London's role as a major global city, and providing the majority of jobs in Camden. This Core Strategy identifies Central London as the focus of the majority of future office and retail development in the borough over the next 15 years, with King's Cross the location of a substantial proportion of this growth (please see policies CS8 – *Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy* and CS7 – *Promoting Camden's centres and shops*).



- 9.6 Camden's Central London area is a major draw for Londoners and for tourists visiting the city, making a significant contribution to the attractiveness and economy of both the borough and the capital. Attractions include the British Museum, Covent Garden, Hatton Garden and numerous theatres, bars and restaurants. These are also used by Camden residents and are therefore important local facilities. Central London is considered an appropriate location for facilities that attract large numbers of visitors; however, it is important that these do not harm to local character or amenity or cause congestion. (See policies CS1 – *Distribution of growth*, policy CS2 – *Growth areas*, CS3 – *Other highly accessible areas* and Camden Development Policies policy DP14 – *Tourism development and visitor accommodation*).
- 9.7 Policy CS7 – *Promoting Camden's centres and shops* (supported by policy DP12 in Camden Development Policies) seeks to make sure that new food, drink and entertainment uses do not cause harm to our centres, the local area or the amenity of residents. This is a particular issue in Covent Garden and other parts of Central London. Within Covent Garden and the Charing Cross Road area, new entertainment uses will only be allowed where they are small in scale, have a low impact and will not result in an increased concentration of late night uses. The Council has produced area-specific Planning Guidance for Central London which seeks to manage the location and concentration of food, drink and entertainment uses, particularly those which operate late into the evening, so they contribute to Central London's vibrancy in a way that does not harm the quality of life of local people, the character of the area or other uses or activities. It gives detailed guidance on how the Council will consider the potential impacts of proposals for food, drink and entertainment uses and protect the amenity of residents. In addition, Camden's Statement of Licensing Policy 2008 recognises the concentration of licensed premises in the Seven Dials area of Covent Garden and identifies it as an area subject to special policies on cumulative impact, with a presumption against applications for new premises licences and new club premises certificates.

- 9.8 In addition to providing detailed, locally specific guidance on food, drink and entertainment uses, our Planning Guidance for Central London supplementary document also makes wider recognition of the challenges and pressures experienced in the area. The Guidance recognises that the local areas within Central London, and their residential communities, have different characteristics and pressures. For each local area, it identifies specific issues and provides guidance on how the Council will seek to manage competing interests so that development does not cause harm to the character of the area or the amenity of local residents. The Council will take into account Planning Guidance for Central London when making decisions on planning applications in the area.
- 9.9 There are many conservation areas in Camden's Central London area (Bloomsbury, Charlotte Street, Denmark Street, Hatton Garden, King's Cross, Seven Dials and parts of Regent's Canal and Regent's Park), covering the majority of the area, as well as number of historic London Squares and many listed buildings. This illustrates the high quality of much of the area's built environment and reflects its historical and architectural importance. The Council will take the conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies for these areas into account when assessing planning applications for sites in the area. We will seek to make sure that the design of new development contributes positively to the area and respects Central London's full range of heritage assets.
- 9.10 The Council is undertaking many schemes to encourage walking and cycling in Central London and improve its street environment. For example, we work jointly with Westminster and the City of London in the Clear Zone Partnership, which covers the Central London area (see policies CS14 – *Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage* and policy DP32 – *Air quality and Camden's Clear Zone* in Camden Development Policies). Works in the area include physical improvements to make streets more pedestrian and cycle friendly; enhancing historic streets by improving paving and lighting; and better signage to help pedestrians find their way around the area.
- 9.11 The Camden Site Allocations document will identify the main development opportunities in Central London and set the framework for their development. More detail on our approach to a number of the issues mentioned above is set out in the Camden Development Policies document.

Key evidence and references

- Camden Retail Study 2008; Roger Tym and Partners
- Camden Employment Land Review 2008
- Revised Planning Guidance for Central London – Food, Drink and Entertainment and Specialist and Retail Uses; London Borough of Camden; 2007
- Camden Statement of Licensing Policy 2008
- The London Plan (consolidated with Alterations since 2004); Mayor of London; 2008

